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# Our Times and The Twenties

● Riley Hughes

THERE ARE TIMES, says Henry Adams, which are new to the historian because people are new to themselves. Such a time was that quintessentially American period, the Nineteen Twenties. Here was a time which found itself a discrete and autonomous thing, one which is only now being admitted, ticketed and catalogued, into history's museum. Of our own immediate period—from V-J Day (*forget* Pearl Harbor) to now—it may be said that although it is already history, it remains unmarked by people's special consciousness of themselves. It is a left-over time, a today whose terms must be sought in yesterday and tomorrow, and not in itself.

Not so the Twenties. "In those days," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote a decade later, "life was like the race in *Alice in Wonderland*; there was a prize for everyone." The prizes were various and fragmentary, and as one looks back on them, and on those who achieved them with such a dignity of longing, they resemble rather terribly the rewards Dante distributed in the *Inferno*. Like children liberated for a stampede into the dark forest, the writers of the Twenties—and everyone was a writer and successful and a genius in the Twenties, for all the failures had died in the war—rushed with eagerness from the discredited past into a now they could stamp with their own image. That they were hurtling into a land laid waste was not at first apparent, and besides it would be theirs. For one generation's waste land is another's golden age.

As we look back on the Twenties we are most of all aware that—for all the whimpering that was done—they ended with a bang. Frustration, disillusion, and suicide mark their landscape for us. People did jump out of windows in that bleak October, but they were mostly bankers and brokers. We soon learned they were expendable. Like all catastrophes, the depression-coda of the Twenties left more survivors than it claimed victims. Already these survivors are like the Boys in Gray. They speak of a time that lives more and more only in their memory, that holds little meaning in experience for a new generation.

They ended in a bang, but the Twenties began in joy. The "Victorian War," as Fitzgerald called it, was a common liberating experience. It changed heritage, immediate and pressing, into history. Suddenly everything that oppressed them, everything that stood as commentary on their sense of themselves, was swept away, and the new people of the Twenties rejoiced. The century was born rejoicing, it surprises us to recall; for all that Hardy saw "so little cause for carolings," the end of the Nineteenth Century was celebrated everywhere with the ringing of glad bells.

Even before they left the campus (Harvard and places of dimmer repute) for the battlefields of France, the spokesmen of the Twenties al-

ready felt alienated and uprooted. "Our whole training," writes Malcolm Cowley, "was involuntarily directed toward destroying whatever roots we had in the soil, toward eradicating our local and regional peculiarities, toward making us homeless citizens of the world." History was something that had happened; it was over and done with. Culture was something from some other time and place. The synthetic ivy and neo-Gothic of the American campus (as Van Wyck Brooks observes) served to remind one that books and learning were the products of another, an earlier time. To young men in their teens just before the war, books were either contrivances that falsified life, or life as they knew it was unworthy of being recorded in books. If the latter, there was no possibility that they themselves could become artists—a conclusion not to be borne. Extreme self-lovers, says Bacon, will set a house on fire, were it but to roast their eggs. In the conflagration that was licking away at the monuments of the past, the people of the Twenties (the young and the alive, the beautiful and not yet damned) could read their own confident future.

The young men and women who were born with the century and who felt a proprietary interest in it believed that the long night of history was over. After the small theater of the antique and the sleep-walking of the Middle Ages, it was *me imperturbe*. For after several false dawns, the light was real. Even many in the older generation shared a sense that the long bondage was over; they too were new to the newness.

The young were impatient with the past, bidding it to be gone. With Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine, they resented the fact that everything was crammed in the box and the last of the Victorians were sitting on the lid, smiling serenely. "Not on us," they said to walrus and carpenter looking about them for something on which to feed. The poem Amory wrote "to the Victorians" clearly shows the attitude of the Lost Generation at the time it first began to be troubled, before it was conscious of loss or of itself as a generation:

Songs in time of order  
 You left for us to sing,  
 Proofs with excluded middles,  
 Answers to life in rhyme,  
 Keys of the prison warder  
 And ancient bells to ring,  
 Time was the end of riddles,  
 We were the end of time.

WE WERE THE END OF TIME. That was how they felt, and that is why they welcomed the war that, for them, would sweep away all the rubbish of the past. Yet a certain sense of knighthood, an inescapable inheritance from the Victorians they repudiated, remained to them. As Americans, those who would be the writers of the Twenties found them-



selves by becoming gentlemen-adventurers—spectators, at first, of a war waged for their benefit. As members of a volunteer ambulance corps, as many of them were, they were able to turn war into a spectator sport, to be thrilled by it, to be amused. At first the impossible, picturesque uniforms, the antique helmets, and the horses. But soon the trenches.

Then reaction set in, and disillusionment and horror. And from this dichotomy of views, this awry and slowly-righted stereopticon, came that curious attention to tenderness and violence, to the beautiful and therefore damned, which marks the early formal manner of the literature of the Twenties. No generation since that of the Civil War had seen death so random and gigantic, and none had ever gone to the burned-out seats of culture to view it. Here was a generation dispensed by death and violence, removed forever from the Victorian past and the simple American rectitudes. No longer would this generation retain lifeless keys to a prison forever blasted out of existence; no longer, they told themselves, would they ring the ancient bells. For them the Brazen Head had spoken thrice; the harsh accents of "Time is past!" had uttered the final riddle.

As time had run out, so had space been used up. The exodus was first from Main Street to Greenwich Village, then from the Village to Paris. Soon writers who would have been ill at ease on Main Street found themselves spiritually at home in the presence of Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein. You are lost, Miss Stein told them, and they rejoiced to hear it. How premature their rejoicing was we know; and before long, as Fitzgerald noted, they found their most promising contemporaries disappearing one by one into a dark maw of violence. The "escape from society" and the "religion of art" were celebrated with a medieval tarantula-dance of frenzy. "I am endeavoring," wrote Harry Crosby in *transition*, "to persuade a Chinese professor who is at work on a torpedo which he expects to shoot to the sun to allow me to live in the center of this torpedo."

How quaint this sounds to us who inhabit the vortex of a torpedo infinitely more terrible. We of the Fifties and the men of the Twenties have Crosby's torpedo symbol in common, but the harrowing reality of ours divides us from that simpler age. Crosby (a writer so minor that the age speaks through him, for he had none of the craft that transcends and directs its time) was more frank than most; more thoroughly than most he carried the Faustus-urge for disintegration to its logical extreme. Still, this nervous syncopation, this neurotic signalling of the beating of feet, was the sign of the Jazz Age. Personality, the conscious-I, the responsible self were given the shock treatment of frontal assault. All sense of the person as an individual substance of a rational nature was lost.

Before the decade that began in hope and ended in repudiation was done, Things were firmly in the saddle and riding mankind. The public meetings of the Dada group symbolize what the human person, what the life of the mind, what art had become. On one famous occasion the

Dadaists held a meeting at which six papers were read at once. The speakers could not be heard, as was the intention; one furthered by the presence of horns and bells, with the punctuation from the audience of private arguments and shrieks of manic laughter. The point for the Dadaists (one that seemed increasingly worth making as the Twenties progressed) was that society is mad, life is meaningless, and that the artist must express, not communicate. Henry Adams foresaw, foretold, fore-suffered it all. Only he saw Boston, not Paris, as the center of infection. As he observed earlier—he did not quite live to experience the Twenties, which were so much his own invention—the most cultivated group America could produce on her own shores could unite only to make a social desert that would have starved a polar bear.

The curious, and yet after all inevitable, thing is that the apprentices to lunacy of the Twenties were, most of them, finally tamed and domesticated. From writing "paramyths" and "verticalist texts" read only in their own coteries, they went on to write best-selling fiction and to stories in the best-paying slick magazines. (*transition* is dead, but one still has *Good Housekeeping* and *Harper's Bazaar*.) They and their experiences and their theories entered the mainstream of our popular culture.

That the ideas of the Twenties are of more than antiquarian interest, that they are still operative in our time, is the thesis of John W. Aldridge's contentious book *After the Lost Generation*. Mr. Aldridge agrees with Malcolm Cowley that the Thirties "are becoming the great unknown era of American history." In Mr. Aldridge's view the young writers and critics of the current generation see in the writers of the Twenties no dead Victorian hand but rather an expression of their own connatural waste land. The writers of the Twenties, he demonstrates at some length, achieved their special view, their romantic poignance, because they had known two worlds. They had seen just enough of the old values, however eager on the surface they were to reject them, to make them at length disillusioned with the new. But the writers of the Forties and the Fifties are a post-disenchantment lot. They knew no golden age, could have no sense of crusade, could not even assume a state of cynicism.

As their sense of departure from the old gave the writers of the Twenties a fulcrum of duality, their conscious venture into newness conferred new utterance upon them. Because they truly felt they were facing experiences hitherto untreated in our literature, they invented a new esthetic, new techniques, new ways of saying for the new ways of knowing. The manner of France and the matter of America met and mated. French clarity and the laconic speech of the Midwest came together to form Hemingway's dead-pan style, to give one example. After Joyce, and Eliot, and Hemingway, and Stein, and Anderson gave language to the event, the two became one. Certain habits of violence became unthinkable in a style other than Hemingway's. The fatal gift of the Twenties was a *lingua*

*franca* (which skipped over the wordy, externalist sociologists of the Thirties) that the writers of our own time have made their own. Fatal because it cuts them off effectively from the first responsibility of the artist, the responsibility of joining fresh word to the event.

Most of the "really fine" writers of today, Martha Foley writes in her foreword to her 1951 collection of best American stories, are discovering "the old-fashioned virtues." She means to say that today's best writing (though the evidence remains pretty fugitive) has once again returned to universal human truths. (For Mr. Aldridge, the return from fatalism, however welcome it would be, is unthinkable; the best we can hope for is "events made valuable by sheer style.") But the Lloyd Douglases and the Frank Slaughters, who are as innocent of style as a man could be, have cornered the market on universals. It is impossible, at least in this impressionable stage of our history, littered with contexts from our recent past, to write well of what may be the newness of the Fifties—"love and honor and pity and sacrifice" as Faulkner sees its themes—in the now old, tarnished, and self-defeating manner of the Twenties.

The literature of the Twenties explored, at times with a delicacy and vividness to which we are indebted, the great sadness which is alienation. The literature of the Thirties was a literature of belonging, a local belonging. If the literature of the Fifties, as responsible voices keep telling us it will, is to break away from that despair which, as Monsieur Fiodor puts it, "bestows upon us an empire equal to God's," is to invest itself with the note of universal belonging, we shall have to depart from the manner and the mood of the Twenties. Our times, it would seem, are not new to the prophets. Let us hope that somehow the historians and we ourselves can encounter them confidently, and soon, in their own distinguishable and distinguished idiom.

## ***The Conflict***

● John McCann

Beneath a bouncing neon sign,  
Alone, with smoke in mad design,  
Stands man. As chords of jazz from out  
The hall climb up in parrot flight,  
He ends his smoke and walks into the night.



# The River And Uncle Hamilcar's Big Black Moustache

● Vincent D'Andrea

THE small boy leaned back rather breathlessly and looked up at the higher branches. The fruit was there, big, rich, sweet peaches. He had climbed so far and still they were higher than he. He wiped his hands on his trousers and grasped a limb, pulling himself up. It swung out into space, and suddenly he was falling, branches, sky, fruit, a dizzy whirl. He twisted his body back frantically, arching until his feet touched the main branch, and then pushing outward. He was safe. Shivering, he looked down at the ground. His sister was there.

*You get down out of that tree this instant or I'll tell daddy.* She was brandishing the broomstick, handle up.

*Damn-damn-damn,* was all he said, then scampered back and huddled against a branch.

*You-get-down-this-instant-where-did-you-learn-such-language-you-hear-me?* She poked the broomstick towards him, rattling among the lower branches. *Did-you-hear-me-right-now-you-come-down!*

*Nyah-nyah-nyah,* was all he said, pulling himself up higher. The broomstick came hurtling up, and swished the air near him menacingly.

*Get-down-right-now-or-I-shake-you-down.*

*I'll tell mommy you hit me and made me fall and I hurt myself*

*bad . . .*

*Youuuuu . . . GET DOWN FROM THERE!* The stick was much, much closer.

*No, I won't either, I'll come down, I'll come down.* It withdrew, and he clattered down, landing with a thud near the girl, who stood arms crossed, tapping her foot.

*Look at your clothes—I ought to lick you.*

He backed away, and then with a piercing whoop dashed across the yard and out the gate, clippety-clop-clop. The girl pushed back a wisp of hair from her forehead, dropped the broom, and went into the house.

The boy was safe at the end of the alley. He felt the heat between his legs and the sweat on his face and neck, and when he wiggled his toes inside his shoes he could feel the clean dirt between them.

*Damn-damn-damn,* he whispered. Then he swung out of the alley and began to walk slowly down the street, his hands deep in his pockets. He began to whistle between his teeth.

Soon he got tired of just walking and decided to blaze a trail. He took out his penknife and cut a notch in each tree he passed. He noticed a lot of people walking by and so he stopped at each one a little longer and notched very carefully, but still they didn't look at him and so whenever he finished



one he said *DAMN* very loudly and distinctly. Even then, only a few looked, so he decided to say *DAMN-DAMN* instead. But he only did this once because an old lady rushed out of her house and chased him away from her tree and looked at him very strangely. She had a broom, too.

*I'll find my Cousin Julio, he said, and we'll run away together.* This sounded very good. They could run away to the river and then when they got there they could perhaps fish a little or maybe even climb the rocks on the side of the river. That sounded even better. Then he stopped for a moment and tried to think of why he had said the river instead of another place, like the park maybe, or even the pipeyard.

And then he remembered. Sunday, at the family dinner, Uncle Hamilcar had talked about rivers—and he had talked about going to the river in the spring—they had done it in Europe, he said. Every spring everyone went to the river and threw flowers into it. And then everybody took a bath in it and went home and for a whole week they did nothing but sing and drink and dance and tell stories—mostly about their river or some other river—about how nice it was to have a river, and how good it was for the ground, and how good the crops would be because it had been such a wonderful river-week. And then at the end of the week they picked a king of the river, and they carried him down to the banks and laughed and sang and threw him into the river, and he had to swim downstream and back and then come out

and say, *I have been in the river, and it is good.* Uncle Hamilcar had been a river-king once when he was a boy, and he talked about it, and all the old people listened and nodded, and some other people who had been river-kings talked too, and everybody listened and nodded and smiled.

The only place he could possibly go to was the river. He got so excited thinking about it that he suddenly began running toward Cousin Julio's house, waving his arms and shouting about going to the river in the spring.

His Cousin Julio lived in a shoe-store. That is, Uncle Hamilcar was a shoemaker and had, of course, a shoestore. It was very exciting to be in the store with all the machines going at once making a lot of noise and the smell of the leather and polishes doing things to his nose. It usually made him feel hungry and excited. Now he was outside the store and he could see Uncle Hamilcar through the window holding a shoe against one of the huge wheels on the machine and looking very angry.

But then he always looked that way and it wasn't dangerous really unless he was biting his moustache. Then you had better watch out because Uncle Hamilcar was a very strong man and the muscles in his arms were like snakes. But most of the time he wasn't mad at anyone really, just very sad, and when he was sad he looked angry. He said it was because Americans didn't appreciate having shoes made of leather, and instead of getting angry like anybody else Uncle Hamilcar

just got sad thinking about it, and his big black moustache trembled like anything.

His Uncle moved from the wheel and then he saw Cousin Julio sitting on a box with a lot of shoes around him which he was polishing. Some of them were as big as his head and Julio looked very funny trying to polish shoes almost as big as his head. He felt very sorry for Julio and thought that right then and there it was his duty to go inside and tell Cousin Julio about going to the river. That was sure to make him happy. He would even polish some shoes so that they could start right away.

He went into the store and said hello and Uncle Hamilcar looked up for a moment from where he was trimming some leather from a shoe he was holding against his chest. He didn't know whether his Uncle said anything or not but he saw his moustache move very slightly so he thought that he had, and he waved his hand. His Cousin Julio looked at him and then at the pile of shoes and looked almost sad enough to cry right then and there. Here now, he thought, this is not right. Julio is a boy like I am and boys should not have to do things like polish shoes as big as their heads on nice days in spring.

He told Julio this and Julio smiled sadly and nodded his head and sighed, this time looking from the shoes to his Cousin and then to Uncle Hamilcar. Uncle Hamilcar glared at them and then his moustache started shaking and they thought, oh, Uncle Hamilcar, you cannot be angry at us on such a nice

spring day. But oh, he was, and he started chewing his big black moustache. Then he lifted one of his huge arms and flung a shoe at the corner and shouted, *How can a man be expected to fix such miserable shoes as these? They are not even real leather.* And he began to tremble mightily and breathed heavily through his nose and his moustache was quivering like anything. They were relieved to find that he wasn't angry at them after all, but only at the shoes. Then he moved from behind the counter and opened the door leading into the house, and the two boys could hear him shouting at Aunt Anna. Then Julio's cousin turned and said, *Now, Julio, now is the time for us to go to the river. He will not even know we have gone, and besides he is not angry at us, but at the shoes.* Julio regarded him with his big eyes very sad and he sighed, and his Cousin could almost see a big black moustache trembling on his lip, too, and he laughed so much at this thought that he had to lean against the counter to keep from falling. Then Julio said, *Yes, let us go. I can polish the shoes when I get back. I am tired of polishing shoes anyway.* Before they left they cut some string from a huge ball that Uncle Hamilcar used for sewing shoes; and Julio took some big straight pins from a cushion and stuck them in his shirt.

The river was very beautiful and terrifying in the spring. It glistened and shimmered now and gurgled and hissed. At Sunday dinner they had said it made another noise too, but you couldn't hear that unless it was a very quiet Sunday

afternoon in the summer. Because during the spring the river was still angry at winter and it tried to show that it hadn't been afraid of winter at all, just like a little boy after a fight. But during the summer of course it was a different story. The river had reconciled itself to the winter and spring and it belonged where it was and that was the noise you could hear on summer afternoons. The river was just plain happy about everything, and the noise was a noise of big contentment and sighing. There's just nothing like it at all, they had said. The two boys decided that during the summer it would probably be just too peaceful for boys but just fine for old people and picnics. Then they decided they would go then too, but just to remember the spring and to be sure everything was all right after all. And so you see that if they hadn't gone that day in spring the whole summer would have been ruined, like a promise being broken. For it would probably have taken a long time to forget not going, and going was something you accepted.

And so they were at the river. They looked for a while, and then they said, *Hello, River*, and sat down on the wet bank. Julio said, *The river is very angry today*. Yes, his Cousin said, *very angry*. And they looked at the river, and it hissed and bubbled and boiled right by them. Further out, they could hear the big *shhh* and humming sound.

*Oh, isn't it a fine river*, they said, and felt so happy that they almost cried thinking about it. *I wonder if there are any fish*, Julio said. *Let's try*. So he took out the string, Uncle

Hamilcar's very strong waxed string that he used for sewing shoes, and the big straight pins, and they cut the string in equal lengths and bent the pins and tied them on the ends of the string. Then they dug in the wet bank with their knives and found some grubs and stuck them on the pins and tossed them into the river. The current swept them down and they didn't sink very much so they pulled them back in and tied some stones on them above the hooks and this time they sank very nicely. With the strings tied to their fingers they laid back and looked at the sky and listened to the river.

All in all it was a very fine day.

When they returned to the shoe-store Uncle Hamilcar was at the machine sewing some shoes, and he didn't hear them come in because they were very quiet and the machines were going full blast, louder than ever. Then when he was finished, he turned and saw them and he was very sad. His moustache began to tremble but he did not say anything to them for a while. Then he shouted above the machines, *Where have you been?* And they shouted back, *We went to the river*. And he shouted, *To the river, to the river?* The machines were very loud. Then he shouted, *Well, so, you were to the river and I love you both, now polish the shoes*. And they laughed and laughed and laughed thinking about the shoes as big as boys' heads, and later they laughed even more thinking about Uncle Hamilcar's big black moustache trembling and how sad he looked for days afterwards, even more than usual.



# Meat and Poison

• Max Guzikowski

“CENSORSHIP CAN BE STOPPED” declared an editorial in *The Saturday Review of Literature* for April 16, 1949. The *Reader's Digest* for September, 1951, carried an article titled “Too Many Self-Appointed Censorship Groups” which had previously appeared in *Redbook*. “Abridging Freedom” was the concern of a *New York Times* editorial on July 18, 1948. These are merely random examples of the attention focused on the problem of censorship and the freedom of expression. That problem is by no means unique to this generation or even to this century. It plagued the people of Socrates's time, divided men in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. (The thorny issues raised by the Galileo case still confront us.) Yet, so long as man is able to communicate ideas, so long as he is a social being, freedom and censorship will inevitably be intertwined. Nor is this problem one that is limited to a certain area of man's uniquely human activities. Is a man free to argue publicly that God does not exist? Atheist Robert Harold Scott evidently thought so. Certain California radio stations disagreed and refused him time to expound his atheism. On June 19, 1946, the Federal Communications Commission, in ruling on an appeal by Scott (he had lost a suit against these stations), declared “. . . freedom of religious belief necessarily carries with it freedom to disbelieve and freedom of speech means freedom to express disbelief as well as beliefs.”

The perennial problem of academic freedom was recently highlighted by the dismissal of two professors at the University of Washington on grounds of membership in the Communist Party. In the *New York Times Magazine* of February 27, 1949, Professor Sidney Hook of New York University, after asking whether Communists should be permitted to teach in American colleges, answered in the negative. Immediately, Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, one-time president of Amherst College, declared, on the contrary, that Communists should be allowed to teach, arguing that democracy would triumph in this war of ideas.

The eight hundred feet cut from *Oliver Twist*, the banning of the movie *Pinky* in certain Southern cities, the removal of *The Nation* from the public schools of New York City, the abbreviated life of *The Miracle* in the same city, the objection to the musical version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and to Walt Disney's *Uncle Remus* by certain Negro groups, the attempted banning of James T. Farrell's trilogy, along with works of William Faulkner (*Wild Palm*) and Erskine Caldwell (*God's Little Acre*), the uproar accompanying the attempt some years ago to print James Joyce's *Ulysses* in the United States; all these vividly emphasize the pressing problem of censorship versus freedom.



A thorough treatment of censorship exceeds the scope of this article. What is intended, however, is a discussion of the relation of censorship to the arts, specifically aimed at answering as far as possible and in terms of general principles the question, "Are the arts subject to censorship?"

The answer begins by emphasizing what will not be discussed. Here, I am not interested in what is art or what is not art. That is a question I think a censor *qua* censor has no right or obligation to decide. Yet there are some censorship groups who began with the intention of judging movies, for example, on a purely moral basis and have ended oftentimes by deciding a picture is immoral because it is not artistic. I am concerned, rather, in determining whether art is solely under the direction of aesthetic laws or whether it also has responsibility to moral standards (not, for example, whether an "immoral" picture can be real art, but whether art is subject to censorship because of its possible moral effect). If art is bound only by aesthetic principles, then in the words of the humanist John Haynes Holmes, "... censorship is indefensible under any conditions, by reason of any provocation, in a free society." If art bears some responsibility to moral principles, censorship has an important and legitimate role to fulfill.

The answer to this question demands, at the outset, that an important distinction be made between the work of art and its production. The work of art *in itself* is amoral. There is no morality, good or bad, involved in a painting, a statue, a book, or a movie. Any one of these may portray morality or immorality, but in itself implies neither, for it is merely the effect of a human act, not the act itself. But in practice the production of the work is necessarily either moral or immoral, for it is uniquely a human act, that is, proper to man as man. If the act is human (as distinguished from acts of man which are amoral, such as digestion and respiration), then it is the result of the combined influence of intellect and will, and consequently must be performed for a known end. Concretely that end is either morally good or bad, accompanied by circumstances, all of which make the production of the art work morally good or bad. In practice, therefore, an artist, to put it simply, is going either toward or away from his salvation, just as really as any other person does in the performance of a human act. Thus, it is my conviction that any artist can be immoral in the production of a true work of art or moral in effecting what is really not art. Again, I do not intend to get involved in any controversy as to what is or is not art. I am presuming here that some works are art and some are not and in either case the producer may perform a meritorious or a sinful act.

Suppose, then, that the artist is immoral in producing art. Is he subject to censorship? No, if the act is considered merely in itself. Censorship is not directly concerned with the individual morality of the artist. I do think, however, that the artist is not *free* to express himself if the act is immoral, but this is a consideration quite distinct from the problem of censorship.

Accordingly, art considered only from the viewpoint of its production is indifferent to censorship. What about the work of art itself? Just because it is amoral, are we to conclude that it is beyond censorship (for censorship is intimately linked to morality)? St. Thomas gives us the answer when, in the *Summa Theologica*, he discusses the very practical and pertinent (to us) question whether it is proper for a woman to adorn herself. He agrees that she may do so, providing that her dress and make-up do not adversely affect the morals of the majority. Here he has singled out the principle underlying the reasonableness of censorship.

Any work of art, not considering here whether it is good or bad art, be it novel, play, movie, dance, statue, or painting, cannot help having an effect upon people. Since that effect is the result of a human act on the part of those who behold the work, it must be either morally good or morally bad. Now, if the effect for the majority of people is bad, then the work must be censored, precisely because it will lead those persons away from their ultimate happiness. No matter how loudly the proponents of an extreme "art for art's sake" philosophy may protest, the truth is that art exists for man, not man for art. Moreover, as an artist, man does not give up his social nature; he enhances it, in fact. He is still obliged in virtue of it to help his fellowmen attain salvation—positively by his good example and encouragement, negatively by placing no undue obstacle in the way of their ultimate happiness. Thus the artist *can* help others toward a better life by the inspiration of his work; he should not make it easier for them to sin.

How can a work of art affect others adversely, making it subject to censorship? Generally, it does so through disproportion—a term vague enough to demand clarification. Disproportion is lack of order or harmony. A novel, play, movie, or any other art form may be disproportionate because it lacks order, not in the artistic but in the moral sense; that is, when considered in the light of its possible effect upon the viewer or reader. Being out of proportion does not necessarily mean that it is false nor does it imply that the false is necessarily disproportionate. A fantasy, or whimsy, for instance, is false, for it does not portray reality as it is. Yet it is not disproportionate because the reader or viewer knows the fantasy is not intended to portray reality. Again, the artist may portray what is true and yet find his work subject to censorship because the truth was given an undue emphasis—that particular truth is not in harmony with the rest of truth. Thus it is certainly true the vocabulary of some soldiers does not encompass much more than four-lettered profanity, and it is also true that some soldiers are immersed in thoughts of sex; yet to fill a book with little more than repeated instances of both as did James Jones in his *From Here to Eternity* is evidently an unreasonable spotlighting of a truth.

If the artist, moreover, portrays the false as reality, his work too may be censorable. If, for example, an author very cleverly and with seeming

authority shows that Jesus Christ was a very perfect man, nothing more, he is guilty of depicting the false as true and his work should be prohibited. Again, if a movie about a minority group gives reasonable cause to suppose that the *whole* minority group is avaricious, ignorant, lazy, or dishonest, then, in my opinion, it should be censored. But if it singles out merely one of the group and pictures him thus, censorship is not warranted. Concretely, if *Oliver Twist*, as it is now being shown, still gives offense and should be banned, then it must be banned not only because Fagin is a Jew, but because Bill Sykes is English and reflects on Englishmen, or because the Beadle weighs two hundred and fifty pounds and is bad advertising for fat men. Consistently in this principle every art form portraying a villain or disreputable character would have to be forbidden, since the villain would surely resemble somebody in reality.

Any art work, then, in my estimation, can be censored if it portrays the false as reality or the truth disproportionately. The reason why it is censorable is that it either provides the majority of people with a real, proximate occasion of sin, or induces them to make a false judgment. In both instances the censor must judge the work not as art but as morally affecting the majority.

All this sounds very pat in theory, you may say, but practically how are we to determine when and what sort of censorship should be applied? I do not think this question can be answered by giving any determined criteria that are applicable in every instance. Each book, each play, each movie is something so individual, presented under such particular circumstances, viewed or read in such particular situations, that I think no specific principles can be given. I intend merely to point out some of the difficulties involved in applying the general principle outlined above and suggest some possible solutions of them.

Granted that censorship is necessary, who is to be the censor? Should minority groups be the censors in works involving them? Are the artists themselves to set up a board of censors? How is a censor or censors to know what will adversely affect the majority? The saying "One man's meat is another man's poison" is never illustrated more truly than in trying to determine what constitutes an occasion of sin. What medical students and doctors would accept as a matter of course may be a real source of temptation to most laymen. A person raised amid sexual immorality might judge *From Here to Eternity* or *I Am a Camera* as somewhat ordinary. Thus the censor's problem of deciding what is morally harmful to the majority is conditioned by his concept of what it should be. Is his decision to be merely on a numerical basis or is it to be qualitative? It seems to me that the decision, in most instances, cannot be on quantity, for in such a subjective situation how could any censor determine that a book, for example, will adversely affect fifty-one and not forty-nine per cent of its potential readers?



I would suggest here that works of art are not produced for medical students, sex deviates, hardened criminals, scrupulous people, or those with extremely tender consciences. They are intended to reach the average intelligent layman, one neither unduly sheltered from nor excessively exposed to immorality in any form, one who by reason of his profession or occupation is not forced to meet proximate occasions of sin frequently. (I will admit that this average intelligent layman is a rather nebulous person but he is necessarily so by definition. The concept of such a person will vary depending on the type of art work to be considered and the circumstances in which it is presented to the public.) If any art form proves a real, proximate occasion of sin, then it is subject to censorship.

The censor, moreover, must keep in mind that what may be an occasion of sin in some countries or periods may be anything but that in other places or ages. The difference between what is now considered indecent in dress and what was thought indecent in the last century illustrates the relativity involved in judging some potentially harmful effects.

Again, for example, what is to be considered obscene? The Post Office Department has an opinion; one not shared, evidently, by certain publishers and judges. This points up the difficulty of determining who is best qualified to be a censor. Since the reasonableness of censorship is built on a moral foundation, I propose that the censor be one versed not only in the basic moral principles but also in the workings of human nature. In a great many cases there is none better fitted than a clergyman or a group of clergymen. Otherwise, I cannot single out any other group which *as a group* possesses these qualifications. I can merely repeat that the individual censor, whoever he may be, must have a working knowledge of human nature and moral laws.

Then, too, what if only a portion of the art work is a real occasion of sin for the majority? Is the whole work to be condemned? If so, how large must that part be to warrant censorship? The recent action of Pittsburgh censors in banning an issue of *Time Magazine* because of Pieter Breughel's "The Wedding Dance" to me is a glaring example of the absurdity censors are often guilty of in this regard. Again, the censor cannot be guided by a merely numerical proportion. Some of the questions he has to ask are: What type of audience is likely to come in contact with this work? How much of it constitutes an occasion of sin and how proximate is that occasion? Is the objectionable part confined to a certain area or is the whole production shot through with it? If he can answer these questions, the censor himself determines the proportionality in each instance.

These are but some of the difficulties encountered in the practical application of censorship. As stated previously, the purpose of this article was not to solve them all—merely to establish the reasonableness of censorship in very general terms, to spotlight the problems arising from its practical application, and to suggest some possible answers to these problems.



# On Returning Home

• Claude F. Koch

I CAME BACK in Autumn, six years after the war. This was the place I would call home, if it should be necessary for me to declare myself—this square mile or so of patterned streets, bound I should say by the trolley tracks up Wayne Avenue, the iron conformations of the Reading Railroad with Midvale Steel, and the park at whose lost center I was secure as a child. It is not a quadrangle, really, because the fourth side is shadowy as I grope for it. The Negro district is beyond Manheim, and I have outposts there and influences that still hold me as I think back. The mission church to which we walked by gates and doorways and the conjunction of certain trees with them, the field that is fixed with forms of young men faintly held through some sweet burning fall forever unmoving in my mind, though new homes stand upon it and make their effort to efface it—these are the periphery of the streets and alleys that I am driven back into, through no movement in the mind as eternally long as when the skates' sustained scrape carried me through it. I should not have come back, though I know how inevitably men seek out and dwell upon the promise that somehow they were, and the multitude of forms and fancies they owned—all before some moment when the past became absolute and could be named.

I should not have come back—not in the Fall; the evenings then in Germantown are carried away on the smoke of their leaves, the white mass eddies and fulfills the gaslamps' distortion; through the windows the lights burn in the vaguely familiar way that grieves and isolates. Then the turn of a form on the street catches at some older desire, and the face that partially moulds the light is too often half-remembered. The Autumn plays its havoc with our fragile peace and, stirring the fragments of old needs, makes all men travelers. Besides, we know how small the buildings grow, how slight the steps, how narrow the door and the skylight aperture, after the vast promises that all these things were of space and time and interminable line when we were younger. Now we have defined our desires, and knowing what we look for, we can be appalled at their limits.

The jutting, craggily impressive form of Mr. Bynion contents me now as I watch him through his window as a pale, thin spate of hair bowed under his desk lamp. He is as real through his own hovering shrubs that sentinel the glass as any two-dimensional cutout. It is close to Hallowe'en, and shapes certainly as real are chalked and soaped in more living colors on Lindenslager's window. I am glad he does not see me here in the block of old wall extended in shadow; what could I say to him?

I have talked to the druggist; his store is in the cellar across from the park—tiled and scrubbed, with the mint-clean odor of cosmetics and

medicinals that conjoin with the other scents that move across this night: rotting asters somewhere in the huddled darkness of the park, the icicle sharpness of evergreen under which I know the moulding leaves are packed, suggesting streams so pellucid they must move underground (as indeed the myth was when I was a child that the purest stream was somewhere under the park—we hunted for it and almost found it). The druggist slants his head to one side, he has grown comfortable and the line of neck and jowls is not so clearly defined; his eyes' shocked innocence, magnified by thick lenses, is as much of the park as the chipmunks and rabbits that shadow through it, scarcely detected except by the child moving with them out of time. He says, "Since you left we get no more Rum and Maple Tobacco," and I do not tell him he is mistaken, that it is some other boy he remembers, slipped out of this periphery by time—and I wonder what is really his dwelling place, how close to what primitive life the fawn's eyes see. The illusion of the present is so pervading that almost I do not believe that he has anything in common with the dwellers in the secret heart of the park—but some sanity remains to me from the old days, and I sense his kinship with all the workers in herbs and boiling waters, and all the wondering eyes following the druid white into the shadows of cold stone. His hands rest, refined clay competent among his powders and stone, across the glass of his counter; about the glass there is the elemental, material quality he loves, so his hands are unmoving. Under the glass are the objects I sense he has really little to *do* with—packaged objects decorated with alien symbols.

I should not have come back because the night will not be still, and it pries at what I must forget. I pass Lindenslager's window, which has a dingy, sparsely-cluttered quality that I know cannot be true—and I have almost gotten past, when I am drawn back to confute the visible lie. The same mirror that gave back the boys reedy and angular, and caught their growth and the seasonal ritual of their dress—always surrounding the jubees and wintergreen, valentine hearts and pumpkin heads, the sugar-filigreed chocolate eggs, and the syrupy cherry balls of Washington's Birthday—that same mirror has shrunk so that I must stoop to see if I am really here. Behind me—I catch the movement distorted in the mitered edge of glass—hesitates a figure settled and gaudy, adjusts its tie, and passes on. I do not look at him, satisfied to blame the glass for the injustice done him. On the field grown resonant with the punted ball, shocked and tumbled in the matted dampness among the leaves and ruts, he wore his football gear like armor—shall he, because the bevelled margin of glass makes him unreal, tilt now through all my memories, a gangling Don Quixote? I walk the other way.

The street contracts, expands and contracts again. Out of the movie house strolls Ugo Mauriello, who died on the beach at Peleliu. "Go for Broke" drags in the dreary shade across the marquee; the violet lights wink on and off. Ugo passes me without a word, his shoulders jerk as he walks.

Detaching herself from the moving darkness of the alley by the theater, a girl follows him, tightly clothed in jeans and sweater. Her face was as white and indefinite one windy night on King Edward Street in Wellington. The violet lights blink out.

This is the movie house. Lindsay, the manager, with hesitant, resigned movements, is alone in the foyer changing his billing notices. I press to the glass door and he stares fixedly and emptily at me, smiles indefinitely and bends away to his ads. Behind him a vague light suggests the seats stretching inward, sloping toward the screen. Lindsay's eyes have caught the vague light, and it has imprisoned him. "Yes, sir?" he asks; his eyes settle around me, and I am a geometric form caught in the door's rectangle. Before the war, on gusty Saturday nights in the Fall, he seemed to see clearer—the forms, boy and girl, crowding this foyer, excited on the threshold between shadow and substance. The box is empty where his wife held her certain smile, dispensing tickets. "How is your wife, Mr. Lindsay," I say. He is half stooped, and he tilts his head up to me and sees me, I think, for the first time. "You remember her?"—there is a strained, eager quality to his voice that focuses the hush of wind, and all sound and lack of it to this place. Across the street Ugo and the girl stand, arm in arm, head to head, stilled by Lindenslager's window. I am caught; the theater is a vacuum of dead light, the marquee hunches beyond the door. He is straightening. "You remember her, sir? Let me tell you . . ." His hand reaches out as I jar open the door: a trolley clatters emptily by. And Ugo Mauriello and the girl, where have they gone?

## ***Monologue: 1952***

● Joseph G. McLean

Unarm Eros; we are now for flowers,  
And rain, and wind, and sun in sleep.  
We, not our anguished, mocking dreams,  
Dung-like will nurture pageantries  
Of growing, frozen fire,  
Raising the unloving and unloved  
To cries of martyr worship.

Yes, the dead shall hallow the dead  
Till death brings truth in dissolution.  
So weep no more for dreams,  
There will be graver absolution.

## **Three Poems By John McGlynn**

### ***Gold Is Where You Find It***

Long years have passed since Nathan Brown  
Packed his bag and fled the town.  
He used to be delivery boy  
For pimpled, pompous Mr. Roy,  
But Nathan had romantic dreams  
Of fishing gold from flashing streams,  
And so he skipped the town.

A venturesome lad with dream-capped eyes  
And hardly time for sick good-byes,  
He sought the highway broad and long  
And filled the dawdling day with song,  
While shiny autos rattled by  
And sent the dust clouds swirling high.  
All day he walked and with the night  
Was out of mind and out of sight,  
Forgot by all the town.

Two score of years wend anxious past  
Before our tale can end at last.  
A big black Packard creeps in sight  
And tinges all the day with night;  
Nine Packards trail it, sad and slow—  
At funeral pace to funeral go.  
Some banker's bones thus ride in state,  
Whose soul must share the beggar's fate.  
But, lo, the corpse is Mr. Roy!  
And, lo, Nat's still delivery boy!  
He steers a hearse inlaid with gold,  
His young dreams to the devil sold,  
And lives—five miles outside town.



## ***The Empiric Method***

Now Momus has sway,  
Painting his portholes on the breasts of men  
To trap and test the phantom gleam within.

This is our way,  
Who swear to lift all secrets to the light  
And are ourselves the children of the night.

Till Beauty some day  
Strides by, and science is reduced by lust  
To marking where a sandal scuffs the dust.

## ***The Sad Children***

Play is more grave than life  
To the children who play at life,  
Under rotting porches,  
Slim bodies nursing slim souls  
And deaf to the sound of storm,  
Intent on inch-high cups  
Solemnly filled with water.

"Will you have some tea, Mrs. Brown,"  
Under the rotting porch,  
Safe from the desolate rain  
That pounds along the pavement,  
Safe from the rivulets of blown hope,  
Rainbows swept in a gentle turmoil  
Past crumbling curbs  
To the sewers under everything.

Sometimes the porch is painted,  
Bright, broad streaks of brown  
To cover the toil of years—  
Life thus renewed,  
While the children under the steps  
Play on at their serious games  
With night thoughts locked in their eyes  
And their laughter lost in the rain.

# A Study in Greene

• John J. Keenan

THE great value—in some cases the only real value—of criticism written by an artist is in what it tells us of that artist himself. Such artistic criticism is by way of rationalization for the artist's own practices. Just as Eliot prepares the reader for his poetry in his criticism, so does Graham Greene provide insights into his novels in the recently-published *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays*.

Perhaps the most important thread running through this series of essays is the novelist's praise of what he calls "the religious sense." In essays on Henry James and Francois Mauriac, Greene selects this quality as being that which raises them above the level of most of their contemporaries. How much he tells us of his own philosophy of composition in this passage on Mauriac!

M. Mauriac's first importance to the English reader, therefore, is that he belongs to the company of great traditional novelists: he is a writer for whom the visible world has not ceased to exist, whose characters have the solidity and importance of men with souls to save or lose, and a writer who claims the traditional and *essential* right of a novelist, to comment, to express his views.

Like Mauriac, Greene is profoundly aware of the effects of original sin on mankind; for him, the reality of evil is too much a part of the visible world to be ignored by the artist. Evil is a bond which unites humanity in one dirty struggle. But what is more important to the "religious" novelist is that out of this struggle come saints and sinners, the saved and the damned, people who have an enormous importance in the next world if not in this one.

Writing about a world where sin and temptation, salvation and damnation are real and immediate possibilities gives the religious novelist a greater depth than the secular writer. At the same time, however, it imposes a need for sympathy and understanding, as pointers towards justice. This necessity to map out ultimate justice for his characters tends, I believe, to force the novelist towards an organized religious system of thought as a corrective for what he recognizes as his own personal vagaries. James, Greene tells us, felt strong leanings toward Catholicism as the religious sense developed in his later novels. T. S. Eliot, to bring a poet into the picture, sought a resolution for his spiritual struggles in Anglo-Catholicism. The sense of order in the traditional Church is inevitably attractive to the writer concerned with the spiritual.

Readers of Graham Greene's novels cannot help being conscious of his interest in the relation between God and Man. The emphasis in his characters is on the evil that is so much a part of man's heritage.

Counteracting this terrible evil is the infinite Goodness and Mercy of God. Greene has written:

Every creative writer worth our consideration, every writer who can be called in the wide eighteenth century use of the term a poet, is a victim: a man given over to an obsession.

His own obsession, it seems to me, is the great incomprehensibility of God to our finite reason. We know that he is *all* good, *all* merciful, *all* just. But just how far can we comprehend that *all*? Again and again his characters reiterate the words of the priest in the short story, "The Hint of An Explanation"—"Our view is so limited . . . We catch hints . . ." In the face of our inability to understand even the complexity of our fellow human beings, our attempts to grasp the enormity of God are almost laughable.

That is, they might be laughable if they were not so all-important, if they were not prime purposes of existence: "to know God, to love Him, to serve Him . . ." There is a phrase which I have seen recur twice in Greene's writings that is almost frightening in its comprehension of the human struggle toward Beatitude. In context he writes:

There are things one never gets used to because they don't connect: sanctity and fidelity and the courage of *human beings abandoned to free will*: virtues like these belong with old college buildings and cathedrals, relics of a world of faith.

As "human beings abandoned to free will," Greene's characters are thrown finally upon the "appalling strangeness of the mercy of God." "The Church does not demand," says the old priest in *Brighton Rock*, "that we believe any soul cut off from mercy."

In the passage in which he speaks of the novelist's "obsession," Greene tells us that this obsession is traceable in the symbols used by the writer. The pervading symbol in his own work is the sexual act. The procreative act has the highest possible purpose, but is often degraded: there is an easy parallel with mankind. But the implications of this physical act of love, Greene intimates, can never be fully understood. When seen as part of man's groping search for perfect love, the experience of this highest act of human love leaves a sense of unfulfillment still present. The weak priest of *The Power and the Glory* draws a powerful contrast between human and Divine Love:

God is love. I don't say the heart doesn't feel a taste of it, but what a taste. The smallest glass of love mixed with a pint pot of ditch water. We wouldn't recognize *that* love. It might even look like hate. It would be enough to scare us—God's love. It set fire to a bush in the desert, didn't it, and smashed open graves and set the dead walking in the dark? Oh, a man like me would run a mile to get away if he felt a love like that around.

Greene's latest novel, *The End of the Affair* affords an opportunity to trace the incredible implications of love, even in such a sordid affair as the one between Maurice Bendrix and Sarah Miles. The adulterous

lovers are interrupted in a tryst by a bombing raid. A near miss catches Bendrix in its blast and Sarah finds his body pinned beneath a heavy door. Terrified and certain that he is dead, she falls on her knees and begins to pray for the first time since childhood. She promises God that if He will only let her lover live, she will give him up forever. With that, Bendrix walks into the room and she realizes the terrible bargain she has made with God. In the tortured pages of her diary, she admits, "I've fallen into belief like I fell into love." Bendrix feels the presence of another lover in Sarah's refusals to meet him, but only when he reads her diary after her death does he realize that his rival has been God. The novel ends with his vowing to hate God, Who he believes hates him.

The ways of God are strange. Out of adultery, Sarah becomes enmeshed in a love far greater than she has ever known, and she becomes a saint. Bendrix, who never knew God, is committed to the pains of hatred and the constant consciousness that there is a God. Greene has written, "The greatest saints have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil, and the most vicious men have sometimes narrowly avoided sanctity."

Nathaniel Hawthorne raised a question in *The Marble Faun* that might well have been written by Greene:

Is sin, then—which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe—is it, like sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his?

If one were to construct the blueprint for Graham Greene's world, clearly marked would be his over-all concern with the relationship between God and Man, which is to say that his interest encompasses good and evil, supernatural and natural, divine and human love. His central symbol for this relationship is the sexual act, in which he sees reflected all the contrasting elements of the God-Man relationship. It is an act which partakes of good and evil, flesh and spirit, the natural and the supernatural; and because it is an act of love, its implications are mysterious and endless.

The symbol works most effectively when it arises out of the characters and the situation, as it does in *The Power and the Glory*, and, for the most part, *The End of the Affair*. It is at least effective (and to some, most offensive) when it is superimposed on an ordinary melodrama such as *Brighton Rock*. When the symbolism in Greene does not work, and it must be admitted that for some readers it never does, his treatment of sex is open to criticism on grounds of taste. From an artistic standpoint, his symbolism sometimes controls the story to the detriment of character motivation. But all these criticisms pale before the power of the best passages in Graham Greene's novels, passages overwhelming in their deep insight into some fundamental truths about salvation and damnation.



# The Citizen of the World

• Howard A. Wiley

ONCE THERE WAS a retiring little man named Wilbur Hawkins. Wilbur, who was in his forties and had pink cheeks and wore his hat with the brim straight in back and front, sold shoes in a chain shoe store. He was quietly married and had two half-grown children. Now in the course of his life Wilbur had lived in four different places. He was born and raised in Shickshinny, Pa. When he graduated from high school (eleventh in a class of twenty-one), he went to Mt. Olive College in a little West Virginia town named Ax. Immediately after graduation (he was twelfth in a class of twenty-two) he went to Philadelphia where he got a job selling shoes in a chain shoe store. It was in Philadelphia that he got married. After ten years in the chain store in Philadelphia (where he ranked thirteenth among the twenty-six salesmen) he was transferred to a New York store of the chain. There he worked for fifteen years.

One day the firm informed Wilbur that it was sending him to a company convention in Chicago. He had just barely qualified for the convention by ranking 112th among the chain's 224 New York shoe salesmen. So Wilbur packed a suitcase, kissed his wife on the left cheek, and went to Chicago.

During the first day's session he went to all the meetings and classes dutifully and listened to all the talks

on how to sell shoes. At the end of the day he was very tired. When he went back to his hotel, he had dinner alone and started to go to his room. But he passed a big room where sounds of laughter and revelry could be heard. Wilbur was a little lonely, so he stepped into the room and it turned out to be the hotel bar. No sooner had he gotten inside the door than a big, florid-faced man bounced up and slapped him on the back, winding him badly. Wilbur looked bewildered.

"Hiya, Chum!" roared the big man, whom Wilbur had never seen before in his life. "Don't look so glum," yelled the big man at him. "C'mon, have a drink. Cheer y'up."

Now Wilbur seldom drank. Not because he had any scruples about it. It just didn't interest him. But somehow, at the moment, the idea appealed. And anyway, he didn't quite know how to refuse the big man's overwhelmingly cordial invitation. So Wilbur, mustering all of his will power against his dread of looking hesitant, stepped up to the bar. He let the big man order and he drank the yellow liquid. He didn't like it, much, but before he knew it another yellow drink was sitting in front of him. He drank that, too. He was beginning to drink the third, when the big man asked, "You're a Hoople man, ain't ya?" (Hoople was the name of the shoe company.)

"Sure am!" Wilbur heard himself reply heartily. The answer startled him.

"Where ya from?" asked the big man.

"New York, Chum, the Big Town," Wilbur heard himself say.

"New York! Well, whattaya know about that! Hey, Georgel Georgie!" he called across the room. "Hey Georgie, here's a fellow from New York too!"

The man called Georgie lumbered across the room. He was a tall, thin fellow with a glass in his hand.

"Glad to know ya, Pal," he said, extending a long, bony paw.

"Glad to know you, Pal," Wilbur said, after taking another sip of his third—or was it his fourth—glass of yellow liquid.

"Some place, New York, I guess," said the big, florid-faced man.

"Oh, it's all right to live in, I guess," said Wilbur, "but it's no place to visit. Have a drink on me, Chum," he added thoughtfully. "Same thing here. How about you? Where're you from?" Wilbur asked the big man.

"Oh, hell," said the big man. "You wouldn't even recognize the name. Place called Ax. Ax, West Virginia. Little place."

"Spent some time there," said Wilbur casually, turning the glass around in his hand. "Ever been to Oscar's? Best meal in town."

"You don't say!" bellowed the big man. "Well, I'll be damned. Eat in Oscar's every night. Say, you remember the good lookin' blonde waitress—one with the hips?"

"Sure do," said Wilbur.

"Hello, Frankie!" roared the big

man to another fat man who had jostled his way to the bar. "How ya doin', Frankie?"

"Oh—okay, I guess," puffed the fat man.

"Frankie," said the big man with sober cordiality. "Want ya to meet friend of mine. Chum, this is Frankie. He and I got a room together here. Frankie's a Philadelphia man."

"Spent some time there," said Wilbur. "How's Philly these days? Still got those rattly trolleys?"

"Say, you been around, ain't ya?" asked the big man, in an awed tone. "Cripes, you spent some in Philadelphia, too, huh? Well, you and Frankie ought to have lots to talk over. I'm gonna order us some more drinks." He addressed the bartender briefly, as Wilbur and Frankie resumed their conversation.

"How's Philly these days?" Wilbur asked Frankie.

"Oh, it's okay, I guess," said Frankie.

"Zat so?" they heard the big man bellow. "Zat so! Cripes, now." He turned back to Wilbur. "There y'are, Chum," he roared in Wilbur's ear, "there y'are!"

"Not so loud!" shouted Wilbur, at the top of his voice.

"But there y'are," repeated the big man, pointing to the bartender, "there's a guy once lived in a place I bet you never heard of, even. Tell him, Chum. Tell him!" the big man roared at the bartender.

"Y'ever hear of Shickshinny, Pa.?" asked the bartender.

"Spent some time there," said Wilbur, fingering his glass. "Little place, ain't it. Only grocer in town

is old man Tompkins. Least, that's way it was last time I was there."

The big man looked at the bartender.

"That's right," said the bartender. "Old man Tompkins. Still got his place, as far as I know."

"Cripes almighty!" roared the big man, admiringly. "Where ain't you

been, Chum?"

Wilbur didn't answer that. He just smiled mysteriously and fingered his glass. Then he tilted his hat to the back of his head. In a way, he hoped that someone would turn up from Tiffin, Ohio. As a boy, he had spent a summer on a farm just outside Tiffin, Ohio.

## ***The Cremation***

● W. Nelson Francis

There isn't room enough on earth to hold  
The things each person in his lifetime makes;  
Creating hands, projecting mind alike  
Would fill the world with fragrants of the dead  
And leave no room for living. So I burn  
These childish fabrications of my sons,  
Watching the flaking ashes fall away.  
Bits of colored paper skewly stuck  
To make a picture, wood crudely shaped  
Into scarce recognizable semblances  
Of ships and planes and Tommy guns—  
Being finished, they are dead, and what is dead  
Must undergo the clean decay of fire.

The flame works fast; now many weary hours  
Of fumbling, frustrate toil by childish hands  
Are noncommittal ashes. I do wrong  
To let my father's heart be moved by this.  
Giving them life, I gave them death as well,  
And as I burn these fragments, I foretell  
The last slow flameless fire of decay.



# I'll Take the Slow Road

• Roland Holroyd

A PERSON doesn't have to be born on a goose-feather bed to be an enthusiastic exponent of the art of moving from one place to another. He simply has to have an insatiable curiosity as to what lies over the next hill. I suspect that we all inherit a primitive migratory instinct, a sort of seasonal atavism. Generally its symptoms are most strongly manifested in the spring of the year, when we find ourselves strangely and powerfully attracted by the displays and folders of the various well-established travel agencies. It is well to study the information thus generously put at one's disposal; it gives important leads as to what desirable trips to consider and, very much to the point, significant clues as to where not to go. A trip of mine across South America via the Amazon River started embryonically when I saw a "1000 Miles Up the Amazon River" poster in Dean & Dawson's window, in a small Yorkshire town I was visiting years before I made the trip.

Speed is inversely proportionate to the art of traveling. The greater the speed, the less the "art." A fast trip on a "name" train, where one is kept at a constant temperature so that no spoiling will occur en route (of Bird's-Eye Products), a sixty mile-an-hour clip in an automobile for three hundred odd miles between two fences on a turnpike toll road, or an airplane trip where one can be catapulted to one's destination at 200 miles an hour—these give the least possible returns. A gourmet lingers over the food, enjoys every item. It is the glutton that bolts it. The destination to be reached is always secondary to the means of getting to it. Therefore, it follows that walking is the very best way. Having spent five successive holidays, when I was in my teens, tramping through the lakes region of northern New Jersey and the Catskill region of southern New York, I can vouch for that. Field trips without number in the pine-barrens of New Jersey, down stream-valleys such as those of Crum, Darby, Chester, Ridley, Perkiomen Creeks and the far-famed Wissahickon, along the North Hills of Chester Valley, along the foot-hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, have convinced me that walking is the most satisfying of all the modes of travel. There is time to enjoy the plant life en route, and the animal life and the local geology, along with healthy muscular exertion and good fresh air. That is travel joy of a truth! To be sure, one should have maps. The best and cheapest are those procurable from the U.S. Geological Survey. Trails are marked in dotted lines; secondary roads, in double dotted lines. These roads are the ones to explore. It has been said that third class riding is better than first class walking, but I am not at all convinced.

That brings us to another kind of slow motion. The old interurban

trolleys are almost extinct now. The grand old Liberty Bell Route to Allentown succumbed last September. It meandered through Pennsylvania-German towns, across rich farmland and beside lovely streams. A miserable bus line has replaced it. The Liberty Bell followed to travel's limbo the Doylestown-to-Easton, Trenton-to-New Hope, West Chester-to-West Grove lines and a host of others which made travel through the adjacent countryside a pleasure to look forward to. The cheaper substitutes may serve the purpose in fine weather, but on an icy, sleety night give me steel against steel and a boxful of sand. The interurbans reached their climax about 1920, and with the disappearance of the Bucks County line from Bristol to Doylestown, probably the first to go, they one by one followed suit. A speed-maddened modern age considered them too slow. Speed brings danger and with it the thrill commences. I remember when it was possible to go from Delaware City to Bangor, Maine, by electric car, and many of them were open cars, too. The excellent Red Arrow lines to West Chester and Media, which had a narrow escape last year and are still not free from danger, alone remain in the vicinity of Philadelphia. During the Easter Holiday I rode the last Maryland interurban from Frederick to Thurmont, a line maintained by two sturdy old cars which run alternate weeks, and which seems safe from extinction for the time being. The replacement of the interurbans with buses is like substituting prunes for the main dish at a strawberry festival.

The railroad branch lines, single track affairs, are on the way to oblivion next. Almost all of them have discontinued their non-profitable passenger service, or are planning to do so. Differing from other means of transport, railroads are not subsidized. The only possible way to relive happy experiences of yesteryear is to join in the trips of the National Railway Historical Society, which has chapters all over the country and a very active one in Philadelphia. As a member, I was able again to ride the Landenberg Branch of the B&O up beautiful Red Clay Creek in Delaware; the old Wilmington & Northern Branch of the Reading, which slavishly follows the historic Brandywine to its source in the Brown Hills; and the grand old Oxford Branch of the Pennsylvania, which traverses the lush countryside of Chester County. These have long since given up regular service, but so long as the steel remains it will be possible occasionally to make the runs behind some fine old "tea kettle." The Wilkes-Barre and Eastern, which as an "ice and huckleberry" railroad wound its way through unfamiliar parts of the southern Poconos, has vanished save for a few rotting ties. Still to be enjoyed—and one can never forecast for how long—are the Newtown and the New Hope Branches of the Reading, the justly famed Maryland & Pennsylvania, nicknamed the "Ma & Pa," and the last of the narrow-gauge lines, the East Broadtop from Mount Union to Robertsdale, Pa. Of course only the older generations can recall the famed Mauch Chunk Switchback. Several years ago I had the distinction of being the last to go from Philadelphia to Pennsylvania State College entirely

by rail. What a unique experience it was to ride the old Bellefont Central onto the college campus. Anyone interested in the few lines still functioning should read *Mixed Trains Daily* by Beebe and Clegg (Dutton), as well as *Virginia & Truckee* by the same authors.

Travel by boat is difficult nowadays, too. I will long remember the comfortable cabins, the spacious deck and the satisfying cuisine of the side-wheelers which ran down the Chesapeake and up the Rappahannock, the Piankatank, the Patuxent, the Wicomico, and other rivers. I have taken them all. They were run by the now extinct Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic and the Maryland, Delaware & Virginia Railroads. They were slow but restful—a wonderful restorative after a siege of examinations in June. Boats still go down the Potomac from Washington and down the Chesapeake from Baltimore to Norfolk, but the York River Line to City Point, whence one took a connecting train to Richmond, no longer runs. Farther afield were the Hudson River Day Line, the Albany & Troy Night Lines, the Fall River Line and the Cape Cod Canal Route to Boston. Mere memories, now. The motor trucks and airplanes have strangled the coastwise steamship companies, too. Some of us recall the Merchant & Miners, the Old Dominion, Clyde and Mallory Lines, whose ships were well appointed and afforded pleasant trips of three or four days' duration.

Speed is a heady draught and the thrill-thirsty traveling public demands it and pays for it in a fearful yearly toll of life. The slower methods of travel provided an intimacy with the countryside and gave to the journey a zest which no motor or air transport can ever afford. In establishing that intimacy lies the art of traveling. Several years ago I visited Albert Idell, the well-known Philadelphia novelist, at his home in Antigua, Guatemala. "You are returning by plane?" he asked me. "No," I replied, "nor by steamer from Puerto Barrios." He was curious, and asked if I were going to hazard the journey by automobile over those parts of the Pan-American highway which are completed. I told him that I was going by train, all the way from Guatemala City to North Philadelphia. "How I wish I had the time to do it, too," he said. What a trip that was! Down the Palin "Hill"; along the Pacific Coast with extinct volcanoes in constant view; the Mexican frontier, the crossing of which added piquancy to the trip; the 36-hour ride across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to Vera Cruz; and finally the glorious climb past snow-capped Mount Orizaba and the Aztec Pyramids to Mexico City. The rest of the trip, via Laredo and Memphis to Philadelphia, was relatively uneventful.

But I hope I have established the point that distance from home has little to do with the enjoyment of the art of traveling. I have several times been the only passenger on some train near home which still carries an occasional passenger to keep its franchise. The destination to be reached is of secondary importance. I definitely discourage the "carbon-monoxide" routes with their blatant "comfort" stops. Travel by air is only a means of getting from Locus A to Locus B while seeing nothing that couldn't



be more comfortably viewed from a relief map at home, where there would be no fear of air-sickness. I have no desire, for years at any rate, to develop any intimacy with the clouds.

Generally speaking, it is best also to travel alone. A good friendship is often subjected to an intolerable strain when two people see the same things, meet the same people, order from the same menus and sleep in the same room. Often it is irksome to have to justify one's desire to make departures from the agreed-upon itinerary in order to do some seemingly foolish thing. I can hardly think of one of my many good friends with whom I would be good friends now had we gone together by mule over the Pichis Trail in Peru, canoed down the Pichis and Patchitea Rivers, spent five days aboard the primitive *Huayna Capac* on the Ucayali River, only to have to remain four weeks in Iquitos, twenty-three hundred miles from Para, at the mouth of the Amazon. I have "traveled alone" together with a friend with moderate success. That is, each of us felt free to change plans without considering the other. We were together only when our plans coincided.

In the interest of economy, one should avoid the tourist routes where possible. In some cases it is well-nigh impossible, because certain agencies have taken over the only means whereby one can reach certain places. It poses difficulties, for example, to visit the lakes of Guatemala, the ruins of Quirigua, and the famous native church of San Tomas at Chichicastenango, without employing the resources of some tourist agency. To ride a "mixta" over Guatemalan roads would be a trifle arduous, to put it mildly. For ocean travel, a well-appointed freighter is ideal. Last summer I boarded a comfortable Manchester Liner at Salford, cruised for thirty-five miles through rural Cheshire, and a fortnight later, with little in the way of landing difficulties, disembarked at Pier B at the foot of Cambria Street, Port Richmond, hardly four miles from my home. It was practically door-to-door service. I was thoroughly rested and recreated, as I scarcely would have been had I used a luxurious floating hotel, which would have been far less steady off the Irish Coast and when passing Cape Race, or had I spent fifteen hours sitting in a state of high nervous tension in the cabin of some stuffy airplane.

Finally, see your own country last! There are only about four or five really distinctive cities in the United States and Canada: Quebec, Washington, New Orleans, San Francisco and perhaps Charleston, South Carolina. The rest vary very little except in size and the way the local citizenry pronounce the vowel *a*. The National Parks and State Monuments can well wait until you are sixty-five and ready to retire. By that time, foreign languages, money-changing difficulties, unfamiliar articles of food, and customs formalities will no longer be interesting, but annoying. But in any case let what lies over the next hill always beckon you.

# **The Theater in Philadelphia**

## **This Year of Grace**

● Dan Rodden

**S** CARCE an octogenarian is now in view  
Who remembers a worse theatrical season in Philadelphia than that  
which we have just experienced in This Year of Grace 1951-52.

The campaign opened on a sultry August night (when, as I recall it, the  
Phillies were up at Shibe Park playing the Dodgers)  
With a very unfunny French-type farce by M. Louis Verneuil called *Love  
and Let Love*, with Miss Ginger Rogers,  
Idol alike of callow youths and aging codgers.  
Now, we'd all held hopes for the Brave New Season,  
And with some reason;  
For the afore-mentioned Miss Rogers, idol of callow youths, codgers, and—  
no doubt—Dodgers, you'll remember as having had quite an affair  
With Mr. Fred (his real name is Austerlitz) Astaire;  
And the playwright, last season, had shown his talents  
And a certain Gallic sense of balance

In *Affairs of State*, in which another lovely lady (somewhat younger than  
Miss Rogers; but a favorite of the Dodgers, if not the codgers), Miss  
Celeste Holm, had exhibited her charms;

So we welcomed him with open arms:

We said, "Hi!

Verneuil!"

But his play wasn't quite what we'd expected.

We were dejected

By the end of the first act. The second act was worse, and the third  
was even horrider.

The following morning, after reading the reviews, M. Verneuil took off  
like a big bird for Florider.

And the season was off to a bad beginning.

(To make things worse, the Dodgers beat the Phillies by scoring two runs  
in the eleventh inning.)

[*Rhythmically*] Next in line came *Paint Your Wagon*;  
The music was in keepin', but the plot kept draggin';  
Despite which opinion, the movie rights sold  
For two hundred thousand smackers in that Fort Knox gold.  
(*There was gold in them thar lulls!*)

*Faithfully Yours* was an adaptation  
 From the French, and I thought that—like Vichy and *Love and Let Love*—  
 it reflected on that whole proud nation;  
 But leave us not be chauvinistic—  
 Here's an alarming hunk of statistic:  
*The Number* was written by Arthur Carter, by birth an *Americain*;  
 (I hope that he joined M. Verneuil in Florida, and I hope there was a  
 hurricane.)

Finally (every cloud has a Silvers lining) *Top Banana!*  
 The only person I know of who didn't like it was a Miss Sarah Putnam  
 Stoddard, who was visiting relatives in the city at the time; she  
 teaches seventh grade and Sunday School in Whitefish, a small  
 town (Pop. 2,867) in northwestern Montana.

About Mr. Maxwell Anderson, one thing is abundantly clear:  
 He's sincere.  
 He spends a great deal of his time attacking greed and hypocrisy,  
 And rummaging through history for heroic characters whom he can get  
 to agree with him on his notions of what constitutes American  
 democracy.  
 The latest of these  
 Was (gosh-all-hemlock!) Socrates.  
 But *Barefoot in Athens* was threadbare thinkin',  
 And, if Mr. Anderson is a drinkin' man, I imagine he spent a great deal  
 of his time—in the weeks after the play closed—drinkin'.

*Gigi*,  
 Though *chi-chi*,  
 Was keenah  
 Than *Nina*.  
 (It was also cleanah.)

I wouldn't for the world like to embarrass  
 The New York Critics' Circle, but what I would like them to do is to see  
 their award play for 1951-52 (*I Am a Camera*) some evening when,  
 due to circumstances beyond her control, the leading feminine role is  
 not being played by Miss Julie Harris.

Paul Osborne is a fortunate man. His *Point of No Return* hit town  
 at a time when critics and audiences alike were so perplexed,  
 Not to mention vexed.  
 That, Gad! you'd have thought he had *Oedipus Rexed!*

*Fancy Meeting You Again*, by Kaufman and MacGrath,  
 Was as slim a little whimsy as you ever saw;

(Just in case you think I've wandered from the rhyming path—  
It's pronounced "MacGraw," Bud—not "MacGrath.")

You want high theatrics?  
Psychiatrics?  
You want it melodramatic  
As a Chas. Addams attic?  
You'll like  
*The Shrike.*

The chief preoccupation of Lexford Richards—probably known to his friends  
as Lex—

Is Sex.

His *magnum opus*, *Dear Barbarians*,  
Was not the thing for cloistered nuns, or seminarians;  
It was intended as "closet drama," no doubt.  
Unfortunately, somebody let it out.

I thought the critics rather hard  
To hoist Christopher Fry onto his own metaphorical petard;  
I'm sure that Richard Watts would not—if Kit had been a native—  
Have accused him of "coruscating on thin ice," just because his language  
was figure-8-ive.  
But *Venus Observed* needs few apologists:  
It will very likely be a regular selection of Twenty-seventh Century ("An  
atypical comedy of the Early Benzadrine Period; note the gropings  
toward a dramatic verse form.") anthologists.

Ye'll be pardonin' me tears? They're the first that I've felt in me;  
*Three Wishes for Jamie* brought out all the Celt in me.  
I've a blind spot for Erin, and that's just the way 'tiz—  
Sure, we came here when Ireland ran out of potaytiz.

*One Bright Day* was a play that, at least, had Howard Lindsay;  
But *The Long Watch*, a botch, was strictly from Kinsey.  
*Hook 'n' Ladder*, with its two apostrophes,  
Was one of the season's worst cat-ah-strophes.  
And *The Chase*, a Western of social force,  
Lacked pace; one was tempted to shout, "Get a horse!"

Scarce an octogenarian is now in view  
Who remembers a worse theatrical season in Philadelphia than that which  
we have just experienced in This Year of Grace 1951-52.  
Whew!



## ***A Ballad of the Battle of Wissahickon Heights***

● Claude F. Koch

*(Writing from the Colonial camp near the Trapp the day after the Battle of Germantown, Gen. Armstrong lamented his cannon left in the "horrendous hills of the Wissahickon.")*

General Johnny Armstrong snaked against the Germans  
Camping at Vanduring's or just below the falls,  
But their light horse discovered him hoisting up his cannon  
And their round shot echoed from the forest walls.

Knyphauser's Hessians were the mercenary vermin  
Who cut up Johnny Armstrong that October afternoon  
Then lanced their shot like light through the poplars and the pine in  
To the ranks of Dunlop who was treed like a coon.

Colonel Eysers and Dunlop stood it like a sermon,  
Harrying the Jager's flanks with Johnny's riflemen  
(When that there officer was called to jine the General)  
Though they'd lost five Yankees out of every ten.

But they got 'em out of there, out toward the Kloster  
Where the bones of Kelpius whiten in the brake,  
Tramping through the early snow—the cannon lost or  
Blowed up among the ranks that will not wake.

But, oh, on frore October nights still hear them call the roster  
Of the Continental Riflemen in the hills they could not take.

